

## YEAR THREE / SECTION ONE

### INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN THE 20 CENTURY

Before the outbreak of World War, I {1914-1918}, the six most powerful countries dominated Europe. These were Britain, France, Austria-Hungary, Germany, Russia and Turkey. These six were teamed up into two alliances against each other. The Triple Entente was made up of **Britain, France and Russia**, called **The Allies**. While the Triple Alliance was made up of **Germany, Austria-Hungary and Turkey**, called **The Central Powers**.

On June 28 1914, the heir to the Austrian throne, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, was assassinated in Sarajevo. Austria wanted revenge, and when it became clear that a Serbian had shot the Archduke, she declared war. To support Austria, Germany and Turkey also declared war. Forced by their own treaty to act, The Allies declared war on The Central Powers. By November 1918 when an **Armistice** was signed, 34 million soldiers had been killed or wounded, the Russian, German and Austrian Royal families had been swept from power and the United States of America had become involved in the affairs of Europe. The political face of the continent had been changed forever.

#### **The Versailles Peace Treaty 1919;**

In 1919, the major nations of the world met at the Palace of Versailles to draw up a treaty to end the war formally. The three victorious allies, Britain, France and the United States of America were agreed that the aim of the Treaty should be to ensure that a war like WW I should never happen again. However, they did not agree on how this should be achieved.

The U.S.A. advised that the countries, which had lost, be treated with dignity. But Britain and France wanted to weaken those countries so much that they would lose the ability to ever fight war again. In June 1919, Germany was forced to sign the treaty. It had very harsh terms;

- ❑ **War Guilt Clause** – The Treaty stated that Germany was to blame for the war.
- ❑ **Reparations Clause** – Germany had to compensate Belgium, France and Britain for the damage to their lands as a result of the war. € 8.4 billion.
- ❑ **Territories Clause** – Germany lost all of its colonies. She also lost land to France (Alsace-Lorraine) and to Poland (The Polish Corridor).
- ❑ **Demilitarised Clause** – Germany was forbidden to have any troops within 30 miles of the River Rhine.
- ❑ **Troops Clause** – Germany was not allowed to have a navy, an air force and only 100,000 troops in her army.

#### **The League of Nations;**

At the Versailles Peace Conference in 1919, President Woodrow Wilson of the United States put forward the idea of a League of Nations to help states solve future conflicts among themselves without having to go to war.

The League was good at solving rows between smaller states but failed with the larger states. This was due to the fact that many of the larger states refused to be members at important times. The U.S. never joined and when Hitler came to power in 1933 he took Germany out of it.

#### **THE RISE OF FASCISM.**

The people of Germany hated the Treaty and pointed out the unfairness of it. In time the payment of reparations ruined the German economy and created a political situation perfect for someone like Hitler to use to get to power.

Italy had entered the war with the allies in 1915 and finished on the winning side. She came to Versailles expecting to get land and money from Austria. However, none of these happened and this failure, along with high unemployment made the Italian Govt. very unpopular with the people in the early 1920's. In both of these countries Democracy as form of Government became very unpopular.

### **The Fascist Dictators.**

In 1920's a new form of Government emerged in Europe, called **Dictatorship**. This meant that one man ruled a country without the control of Parliament and could not easily be removed from power. Dictatorships grew up in three main countries in Europe. In **Germany, Adolf Hitler**; in **Italy, Benito Mussolini** and in **Spain Francisco Franco**.

### **Characteristics of Dictatorships;**

- ❑ All opposition to the rule of the Dictator is outlawed and the Dictator controls every corner of people's lives – this is called **Totalitarianism**.
- ❑ The Dictator demands the complete obedience of every citizen and uses the army and police to enforce this obedience.
- ❑ The Dictator demanded that every citizen loved his or her country without question.
- ❑ The Dictators' were strongly anti-communist and were determined to get rid of communism in their countries.

### **Benito Mussolini 1883 – 1945.**

Born in Northern Italy, he had various careers, teaching and journalism until he became interested in politics. He believed Italy had been badly treated at peace talks in Versailles. In addition, there was a severe economic depression and unemployment soared. Riots and clashes with police were common. Weak Govt. failed to deal with the crises. Mussolini saw the need for new political ideas. He founded the Fascist Party in 1919. He proposed the following policies.

- ❑ Strong leadership.
- ❑ Law and Order to be restored.
- ❑ To make Italy great again as she had been at the time of the Roman Empire.
- ❑ To destroy Communism.

Over the next three years the Fascists went from strength to strength. They were telling Italians things they wanted to hear. Mussolini gathered a bodyguard called **The Blackshirts**, who fought street battles with the Communists. He gained much support from the wealthy that saw him as the only way of stopping the spread of Communism.

In October 1922 Mussolini threatened to "**March on Rome**" to seize power. To avoid this, King Victor Emmanuel invited Mussolini to become Prime Minister.

Once in power Mussolini set about establishing a Dictatorship in Italy. All Political Parties were banned except his own. Trade Unions were abolished and Parliament no longer had any say in running the country. The media was only allowed to report what Mussolini wanted the people to hear. He styled himself "**Il Duce**" – **The Leader**

Despite these restrictions, he was popular with Italians because he got things done.

- ❑ Millions were put to work on vast public schemes, such as draining the Pontine Marshes for farmland just outside Rome.
- ❑ Food production was greatly increased.
- ❑ Law and order was restored.
- ❑ The Lateran Pact, 1929, signed with the Pope, brought an end to nearly 70 years of disagreement with the Catholic Church.

Mussolini made Italy relevant again on the World Stage, he presented himself as a man of peace and he brokered many international peace agreements. However, in 1935 he ordered the Italian army to invade Abyssinia {Ethiopia} in an attempt to rebuild the Roman Empire. The reaction of Britain and France angered him and in 1936 he became an ally of Hitler when he signed the Rome-Berlin Axis. In 1938 he allowed Germany to annex Austria and later Czechoslovakia. In 1940 he entered the war on Hitler's side. This was to be a disastrous decision, the Italian army suffered a series of defeats and in 1943 the Allies invaded Italy. In 1945 Mussolini was captured and shot by Italian resistance fighters, his body hung in a square in Milan.

### **Germany between the Wars.**

At the end of WW, I the German Government collapsed and leading politicians met at the town of Weimar to discuss what to do next. They set up a Republic with a Parliament or **Reichstag**, elected by the people. The new state was called **The Weimar Republic**. The first thing they did was accepting the Treaty of Versailles; something the German people never forgave them for. Then in 1920-1924 the economy fell into decline. Unemployment soared and because of Reparations payments the Govt did not have enough money to run the country. In 1929 after the **Wall Street Crash**, it was clear that the Weimar politicians were not the men to solve Germany's problems. Onto this stage stepped **Adolf Hitler**, with a series of bold solutions to the problems facing Germany. As the economic situation worsened Germans turned in droves to Hitler's Party, **the Nazi's** and on **January 30, 1933**, Hitler was appointed **Chancellor** of Germany. The Weimar republic was dead as Hitler proceeded to set himself up as a Dictator.

### **Adolf Hitler 1889 – 1945.**

Born in Austria both his parents died when he was still at school. Refused a position in the School of Art, he lived the life of a down and out in Vienna. At the outbreak of WW, I he joined the German army and was decorated three times for bravery. He was in hospital when Germany signed the Armistice in 1918. Returning to Germany he was employed as a Government spy in Munich. One of the groups he was sent to spy on was **The National Socialist German Workers Party** or Nazi's. Attracted by their ideas he joined them and quickly became their leader and in 1923 led a failed Coup, after which he was imprisoned for a year. While in prison he developed his political ideas in his book **Mein Kampf**.

- ❑ **Hatred of Jews** – Hitler blamed the Jews for Germany's defeat in WW I.
- ❑ **Hatred of Communism**- He was determined to rid Germany of all Communists, who he saw as a great threat.
- ❑ **The Master Race**- Hitler believed that Germans or Aryans were the Master Race, whose destiny was to rule the world.
- ❑ **A Belief in Germany's Greatness** – He was determined to wreck the Treaty of Versailles.
- ❑ **Unification of Germany** – Hitler wanted to unite all German-speaking nations under one leader – himself.

After the Wall Street collapse in 1929, the German economy went into freefall. Millions lost their jobs and prices soared so that most families couldn't afford to eat. Only the Nazi's seemed to offer any solutions to the situation and their popularity soared. In 1928 they had 12 seats in the Reichstag, by 1932 this had risen to 230 seats. Hitler now led the largest party in Germany and on the 30<sup>th</sup> January 1933 he was invited to form a Government.

In February 1933 the Reichstag burned down. Hitler blamed the Communists and used the occasion to ban the Communist Party and arrested 4,000 members. Within weeks the first Concentration Camp opened at Dachau to cope with the huge numbers of people being arrested. Now that the second largest party in the State had been abolished, Hitler called another General election in March. 1933. Later that month he forced **The Enabling Act** through the Reichstag; this allowed him to rule by decree without the consent of Parliament for four years. Democracy in Germany was now effectively dead.

In 1935 the President of Germany, Von Hindenburg, died and Hitler took on the role of Head of State. He was now master of Germany. Styling himself **Der Fuhrer** (Leader), he called his government **The Third Reich**. (3rd Empire)

All other parties were banned, as were Trade Unions and all youth groups. All children were forced to join a new movement called **The Hitler Youth**, which swore loyalty not to Germany but to Hitler. A state police was set up called the **Gestapo** to ensure all Germans did what they were told.

### **Hitler's Foreign Policy.**

Hitler's foreign policy had four main aims.

- ❑ To make Germany great again.
- ❑ To destroy the Versailles Treaty.
- ❑ To unite all Germans.
- ❑ To expand Germany eastwards and enslave all Slavic peoples (**Lebensraum**)

As soon as he became Chancellor in 1933, Hitler announced that Germany would no longer pay reparations to France.

In 1935 he re-established the German navy and air force; he introduced conscription and soon had an army of two million men.

In 1936 he marched his troops into the Rhineland repossessing it for Germany.

In 1938 he took over Austria in an event known as the **Anschluss**. (German for Annexation). In September 1938 he demanded that Germany be given back land she had lost to Czechoslovakia in the Versailles Treaty, known as the **Sudetenland**. France and Britain gave in. In March 1939, confident that Britain and France would give in again he took over the rest of Czechoslovakia, marching in to Prague on 17<sup>th</sup> March.

In August 1939 Hitler shocked the world by signing a treaty of friendship with his hated enemy, Communist Russia, called **The Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact**. On Friday 1<sup>st</sup> September 1939 he invaded Poland. This was too much for **Britain and France** and they **declared war** on Germany on **3 September 1939**.

### **World War II 1939 – 1945.**

#### **1939.**

Germany had developed a new battle tactic called **Blitzkrieg** or **Lightening War**. At first aircraft bombed cities to knock out telephone lines, power stations and to destroy the enemy air force on the ground. This was quickly followed by large numbers of tanks and troops to take control of territory and capture prisoners. It was fast and shocking and within three weeks Poland had been taken over. For the next six months, nothing happened in Western Europe, so much so, that the media called it **The Phoney War**.

#### **1940.**

In April Germany attacked without warning and defeated Denmark and Norway. In May, Belgium, Luxembourg, Holland and France were invaded, once again without warning and defeated in six weeks. The British only just managed to escape at **Dunkirk** in June, leaving all of their equipment behind. Germany now controlled Europe and everybody expected Britain to ask for peace from Hitler. Everybody reckoned without **Winston Churchill**, Britain's new Prime Minister. After the British army escaped from Dunkirk he addressed the Nation saying

*“We shall fight them on the beaches, we shall fight them on the hills, and we shall fight them in the streets we shall never surrender!”*

Hitler drew up plans to invade Britain **{Operation Sealion}**. To do so he would first have to destroy the Royal Air Force and in the summer of 1940 he set about doing just this. Churchill called it **The Battle of Britain**. The People called it the **Blitz**. Day after day thousands of German planes crossed the English Channel to bomb the towns and cities of Britain. Every day they met determined resistance from the R.A. F. in their fighter aircraft, **Hurricanes** and **Spitfires**. Helped by a new invention they had developed called **Radar** the British were ready each day to repel the German onslaught and as losses began to mount **Hitler** ordered that raids should take place at night only. 60,000 civilians were killed during the Blitz but when the **Luftwaffe**, changed tactics, the British saw that as a victory and became more determined than ever to resist Hitler.

## 1941.

In March Germany invaded Greece and Yugoslavia, conquering both and Hitler’s **Afrika Korps**, commanded by **General Rommel** advanced across North Africa towards The Suez Canal to cut off the supply of oil to Britain.

In June, Hitler made his **first great mistake**; he broke The Nazi-Soviet Pact and invaded the Soviet Union. His aim was to secure **Lebensraum** or “living space” for the Master Race and to enslave all of the Russian peoples. Hitler’s armies were divided into three groups.

- ❑ **Army Group North** – marched towards Leningrad {Now St. Petersburg }
- ❑ **Army Group Centre** – marched towards Moscow.
- ❑ **Army Group South** – marched to the wheat rich Ukraine and to the oil fields of Southern Russia.

The Germans advanced rapidly and captured vast areas of Soviet territory. The Soviet leader **Joseph Stalin** ordered a **Scorched Earth** policy, to burn everything the advancing Germans would need. In October the Russian winter set in and halted the German advance, just outside Moscow. The winter gave the Russians the one thing they needed, time and under **Marshall Zhukov** the **Red Army** counter attacked and pushed the Germans back from the capital.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the world, the Japanese Navy attacked the American fleet at anchor at **Pearl Harbour** on December 7. The next day the United States declared war on Japan. It was now that Hitler made his **second great mistake**; he declared war on the U.S.A.

## 1942.

The war began to turn for the Allies. Hitler made his **third great mistake**, when in the summer he changed the objectives of the Russian invasion. He ordered **General von Paulus**, commander of Army Group South to capture the Soviet city of **Stalingrad**. Stalin was determined that the Germans should not take the city bearing his name and poured vast quantities of troops and equipment into the area to stop them. The Red Army stopped the German advance in the city itself in October 1942; in December 1942 they launched a counter-attack, throwing 3 million soldiers against an exhausted, half-starved 6<sup>th</sup> Army. Using battle tactics similar to Blitzkrieg, they surrounded the Germans and locked them inside a ring of steel. Over the next 5 weeks they gradually closed the ring until the 29<sup>th</sup> January 1943, against Hitler’s orders, Von Paulus surrendered unconditionally to the Soviets. His army was marched off to captivity in Siberia and only 3,000 Lived to return home in 1953 after the death of Stalin.

Back in Africa, the **British Eight Army**, under **General Montgomery**, defeated Rommel at the **Battle of El Alamein**, in October. It was Hitler’s first big defeat. He did not have long to wait for his second.

## 1943.

In January 1943 the Russian Red Army launched a massive attack on the Germans at Stalingrad. To the astonishment of Hitler three million troops surrounded **Von Paulus's Sixth Army** at Stalingrad. At the end of January an entire German Army surrendered.

In July, the British and Americans invaded Italy from the south **{Operation Torch}**.

## 1944.

On June 6<sup>th</sup>, **D-Day** {D for Deliverance} 1944 the Allies launched **Operation Overlord** when a huge army under the command of American General **Dwight D. Eisenhower**, landed at Normandy to take France from the Germans. Hitler was now fighting a war on three fronts, in the East, the South and the West. As the Allies had agreed that they would only accept an unconditional surrender, Hitler ordered his armies to fight on. In July an attempt was made to assassinate Hitler at his headquarters in Poland, **{The July Plot}**. The attempt failed and Hitler became convinced that heaven had saved him for a reason. In August the allies reached Paris and freed the city. By the end of the year they were ready to enter Germany itself. In December Hitler launched a last desperate attack on the Americans in eastern France. The attack only lasted days and became known as **The Battle of the Bulge** since the Germans had not actually broken through American lines but had only created a bulge in them.

## 1945.

In January Germany itself was invaded from three directions. In March Hitler retreated to his vast underground **bunker** in the centre of Berlin, he would never leave it alive. In April the President of the U.S. **Franklin Roosevelt** died and the Russians entered the city of Berlin and on the afternoon of **April 30**, Hitler committed suicide. A week later the Germans surrendered.

In the Pacific, the war between America and Japan continued. Since the attack on Pearl Harbour, the Japanese had expanded throughout the Pacific Ocean. But in June 1942 a major battle at the **Island of Mid-Way**, took place at which the Japanese navy lost four of its six aircraft carriers. For the next three years the U.S. battled the Japanese for each and every island, at horrendous loss of life to both sides, because the Japanese troops had been taught to fight to the death and never surrender. All the while the Americans looked for a quicker way to end the war. In the summer of 1945 they found it when they exploded the first **Atomic Bomb** in a test in the U.S. As he witnessed the awful power of the weapon he had developed, Robert Oppenheimer, made his famous quote "I am become the destroyer of Worlds"

On August 6<sup>th</sup>, 1945 a single plane, the **Enola Gay** dropped an Atomic Bomb on the city of **Hiroshima**. The entire city was destroyed and 80,000 people died instantly. In the weeks that followed tens of thousands more died from radiation and burns.

A week later another bomb was dropped on the city of **Nagasaki**. Again the entire city was destroyed and 60,000 killed instantly. The following week the Japanese surrendered. The most destructive war in human history was over and around 50 million people had lost their lives.

## HITLER, THE NAZI'S AND THE JEWS.

In 1935 Hitler introduced the **Nuremberg Laws**. Aimed at the Jews, they contained the following measures.

- ❑ Jews were no longer to be considered German Citizens.
- ❑ Jews could no longer marry Germans.
- ❑ All Jews employed by the Govt. were to lose their jobs.
- ❑ All Jews had to wear a special yellow star on their clothing so that everyone could recognise them.

For the next few years Jews were encouraged to leave Germany. Many refused to do so because they had nowhere to go. Some like Albert Einstein were offered jobs in other countries.

On the night of 9/10 November 1938 Jewish Synagogues, homes and businesses were attacked and burned. The police ignored all calls for help from Jews. The event is known as **Kristallnacht**, {The Night of Broken Glass}. In the years ahead Hitler was to push forward with his plan to kill the Jews.

As soon as the war began Hitler issued orders that all Jews in the newly conquered lands were to be rounded up into Ghettoes. Some places had huge Jewish populations. Poland for example had more than 3 million. Once the Germans entered the Soviet Union they began to execute hundreds of thousands of Jews each week using **Einsatzgruppen**, or special execution squads, whose only job was to shoot Jews, men women and children. After some months however these were discontinued and in January 1942, in the Berlin suburb of **Wansee**, the decision was taken to build factories, whose purpose was to kill all the Jews in Europe. This was called **The Final Solution**.

For the next three years, until the end of the war, Jews from all over Europe were brought to special camps called **Concentration Camps** like those at **Dachau, Auschwitz and Treblinka**. Six million Jews were killed in the **Gas Chambers** and their bodies burned in specially designed ovens.

Hitler and the Nazi's considered all non-Germans to be **subhuman** and millions of Russians, Poles and other nationalities died being used as slaves. When the war ended and the full horror of what had happened became known. Public opinion demanded that the leading Nazi's be brought to justice for their crimes. As many senior figures in the Nazi Party had committed suicide in the last days of the war, this proved difficult. However, in 1946 **the Nuremberg Trials** took place, at which the 20 most senior surviving Nazi's were put on trial. Most of them were found guilty and executed.

## **The Impact of World War II.**

- ❑ 50 – 60 million people died.
- ❑ 6 million Jews were killed in the Final Solution.
- ❑ Bombing had devastated the cities of Europe.
- ❑ Two Superpowers had emerged, the United States and the Soviet Union.
- ❑ The great powers of the previous 150 years (Britain, Germany, France) lost their position in the world as a result of defeat & debt.
- ❑ The United Nations was set up in New York.

## **The War in the Pacific;**

**1941;**

**December – Japan launches an unprovoked attack on the U.S. Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbour in Hawaii. War is declared. Germany then declares war on the U.S.**

**1942;**

**June - Battle of Midway, 1<sup>st</sup> aircraft carrier battle in history 4 of Japans 6 carriers are sunk. It stops Japan's expansion in the Pacific.**

**August – 'Island Hopping' begins with the battle of Guadalcanal.**

**1943;**

**January – all but 2 of the ships sunk at Pearl Harbour return to battle.**

**1944;**

**March - B-29's bomb Tokyo.**

**1945;**

**August - Atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.**

**September – Japan surrenders on board the USS Missouri, one of the ships sunk at Pearl Harbour.**

**The World War is finally over.**

## TOPIC ONE – THE RISE OF THE SUPERPOWERS.

Two countries emerged from WW II much more powerful than all the others. The **USA** and the **USSR**, {Union of **S**oviet **S**ocialist **R**epublics} were called Superpowers. As soon as the war ended these Allies became enemies. This is because they had very different ideas about how a country should be governed.

The USA stood for,

- ❑ Democracy.
- ❑ Capitalism – Private ownership of business and property.
- ❑ Liberty – Freedom of Speech, Religion etc.

The USSR stood for,

- ❑ Communism.
- ❑ State ownership of business and property.
- ❑ State control of the media and suppression of Religion.

In 1917 a Communist Revolution in Russia had overthrown the Govt. A one-party state was set up. All private property was abolished as was free speech and the right to make money. Convinced that their new philosophy was the future destiny of the world the Communist Party stated publicly that they would help any country whose people wished to overthrow their Govt. as long as a communist system was put in place of the old system. This terrified business owners and wealthy people all over the world. Hitler and Mussolini had come to power by promising to protect private property and destroy communism.

In 1945 a struggle broke out between these two superpowers for the control of Europe. This struggle is known as **The Cold War**. By 1946 both Superpowers had Nuclear weapons, so a military conflict had to be avoided. Therefore, the two countries competed against each other in other ways. They often supported opposite sides in conflicts around the globe and they competed in the areas of Spying, Nuclear Arms Race. Sport and a Space Race.

Germany had been divided into four sections between France, Britain, USA and USSR. **Berlin** had also been divided into **four zones of occupation**, so that each of the four had troops in the former German capital.

Stalin, the Soviet President did not allow elections in any of the Countries he had liberated from the Nazi's. Instead Communist Regimes were put in place in Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany and Yugoslavia. These countries became known as **the Warsaw Pact**. To ensure that the peoples of these states did not rebel, Stalin stationed large numbers of Red Army troops in them

To counter balance these moves the USA took the following steps,

- ❑ President Truman announced **The Truman Doctrine**, in 1947. According to this, any state wishing to defend itself against Soviet threats would be given help by the USA.
- ❑ **The Marshall Plan** - \$13 billion Dollars would be given to Europe to help rebuild their economies shattered after six years of war.
- ❑ **NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organisation]** – Was set up between the USA and the states of Western Europe.

All of these steps raised the level of tension and mistrust between the two Superpowers. By the 1950's the USA and the USSR had enough nuclear weapons between them to destroy all life on earth. On three occasions during the Cold War, events threatened to turn the struggle into a "hot war", that is a **nuclear war**.

- ❑ **The Berlin Airlift** – 1948 / 1949.
- ❑ **The Korean War** – 1950 / 1953.
- ❑ **The Cuban Missile Crisis** – 1962.



## **The Berlin Airlift.**

Tension was greatest in Germany where both Superpowers had troops. In 1948 the French, British and USA merged their zones of occupation into a new state to be called **West Germany**. They also introduced a new currency the **Deutschmark** to aid the recovery of the German economy. Stalin, immediately saw this as a threat and decided to teach the Western Allies a lesson. He blocked all road and rail links to Berlin, which was in the centre of the Soviet zone of occupation. This meant that the allies could not feed the citizens in their zones

Stalin had left the air route to Berlin open, however, as he did not consider them important. The allies decided to supply the 2.5 million citizens of West Berlin with everything they needed by air. Paid for by the USA '**Operation Vittles**' dropped millions of tons of supplies during the blockade. After almost a year, Stalin realised that the allies were not going to let him have his way the blockade was lifted in May 1949 and tension decreased.

In October the Soviets announced that their zone of occupation would become an independent state called **German Democratic Republic** or **GDR**. Like all the other states under Russian influence GDR became a one party state.

In 1961 the Soviets built **the Berlin Wall** to prevent people in the GDR escaping to the West.

## **The Korean War – 1950 / 1953.**

Korea had been occupied by Japan during the war and with that country's defeat was occupied by U.S. and Soviet troops. The Soviets set up their usual one party state, under **Kim-IL-Sung** called **North Korea**. The U.S. set up a pro- American government in **South Korea**. The border between the two Koreas was set at a line 38 Degrees North of the Equator called **the 38 Parallel**.

In June 1950, North Korea, invaded the South using Russian tanks and weapons. The South was overwhelmed. In response the US sent an army under **General Macarthur** to push the North back. The **United Nations Security Council** sent its own army to support the Americans. This huge force attacked the North Koreans and pushed them into China. The Chinese leader **Mao Ze Dung**, also a Communist sent 200,000 troops to defend the North Koreans. General Macarthur was defeated and his army pushed back to 38 Parallel.

The American General counter-attacked and again forced the North Koreans / Chinese back. He demanded that the Chinese retreat to their own country or he would use nuclear weapons. It was with this threat that Macarthur had overstepped his authority. Only the President could order the use of American nuclear weapons. President Truman summoned Macarthur to Washington, where he sacked him. His replacement General Ridgeway negotiated an Armistice between North and South Korea. Both sides agreed to withdraw back to the borders as they had been before the war. This Armistice still exists today.

4 million people died in the Korean War yet neither side gained anything from the conflict. It was a senseless war.

## **The Cuban Missile Crisis 1962.**

In 1959, the communist leader **Fidel Castro** overthrew the pro-American govt. on the island of Cuba. The US put a trade embargo on Cuban products such as sugar and tobacco. Worried by the idea of a Communist state less than 90 miles off the coast of Florida, the US organised an army of Cuban refugees to invade the island. In 1961 this invasion at the **Bay of Pigs** was a disaster. The Soviet Union took Cuba under its wing establishing trade and military links.

In 1962 US spy planes spotted a Russian Missile ship arriving in Cuba. In October the **US President, John F. Kennedy** announced to the world that spy planes had detected the Russians building Missile launch sites on Cuba.

The significance of this was immediately clear to everyone. It was a massive tactical advantage to the Russians. In the event of nuclear war breaking out, Russian Missiles would destroy every major US city before the US even had time to launch its own missiles.

Kennedy demanded that the Soviet leader **Nikita Khrushchev** immediately dismantle and remove the missile bases. At the same time, he ordered the US navy to blockade Cuba and to stop and board all Russian ships bound for Cuba. This was a serious threat as Russian war ships and missile carriers were crossing the Atlantic to Cuba as Kennedy spoke. The world teetered on the brink of nuclear destruction. The faceoff lasted for six days; finally, Khrushchev ordered the Russian ships to return to the Soviet Union. The event was seen as a clear victory for the USA. Kennedy came to be seen as a great leader, while Khrushchev came to be seen as a failure.

The Cuban crisis had another outcome, both Superpowers realised how close they had come to destroying the world and they began negotiations to stop the build-up of nuclear weapons. These were known as **Strategic Arms Limitation Talks** or **SALT**. In the 1970's two **SALT Treaties** were signed to limit the amount of nuclear weapons each side was allowed to have. **SALT 1** was signed in 1972, while **SALT 2** was signed in 1979.

### **The End of the Cold War.**

In 1984 **Mikhail Gorbachev** became leader of the Soviet Union. He introduced two new policies, **Glasnost**, which gave citizens the right to criticise government policy for the first time. The second policy was called **Perestroika**, which gave citizens the right to earn money for themselves and their families. In 1989 he announced that he was withdrawing all Russian Troops from Warsaw Pact countries. Immediately the people of Eastern Europe began to demand their rights, denied to them, since the end of WW II. In the last six months of that year every country, occupied by the Soviets in 1945, threw out its Communist government. In **November 1989** the people of Berlin dismantled the **Berlin Wall**.

In 1990, at a meeting in **Dublin**, the European Union agreed that East and West Germany could be re-united. That same year Russians were allowed to vote in the first free elections in the country's history. A new President **Boris Yeltsin** was elected. The Russian Republics all decided that they wanted independence from Moscow and on **December 25<sup>th</sup>, 1991, the Soviet Union ceased to exist**. As a political idea, communism was dead. For Mikhail Gorbachev, the success of his policies was bittersweet; he had reformed himself out of a job.

The Cold War was over and only one Superpower remained, the United States of America.

Sources' used include; "Door to the Past" R. Quinn & D O Leary, Folens 2002 and "Focus on the Past", G. Brockie & R Walsh Gill & McMillan 1997.